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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-sixth session of the Commission/ seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
9 to 13 May 1991

ECA ADVISORY SERVICES: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE 1990'S

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1. The preparation of the fourth United Nations Development Decade has been preceded by system-wide reviews of the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to the momentous changes presently sweeping the world. As a result, a new operational framework is in the process of being established which intends to ensure greater relevance, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

2. The International Development Strategy for the Decade has singled out the following areas of special priority:

a) The eradication of poverty and hunger;

b) Human resources and institutional development;

c) Population; and

d) The environment and food and agriculture.

3. With the launching of this Decade, great hopes are being placed by the international community on the ability of the United Nations to play a critical role in reversing the adverse trends of the 1980s.

4. Projections made by the agencies of the United Nations system, however, suggest that, in the absence of major changes in policies, the coming decade will be much like the previous one. While relatively rapid growth is foreseen for some developing countries, such as those of South-East Asia, the prospect for others, and in particular for those of Africa, is one of continued stagnation. It is for this reason that the United Nations and the international community at large have begun to consider what innovative technical assistance strategies - operational activities - they might adopt to prevent such a situation.

5. ECA is not immune from this process. Over the years, it has had a successful history as a United Nations agency and African organization, as seen by the increasing conviction with which Africa defines and expresses its development objectives and related strategies. ECA has been a potent catalyst in the establishment of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD), and Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), the Khartoum and Abuja Declarations, and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP). In adopting APPER in 1985, the African Heads of State and Government underlined the basic necessity of regional co-operation, stating that "the collective effort of member States is the most important weapon for tackling the current economic crisis". The economic recovery, development and transformation of Africa as a region has not only emerged as a topic of priority in international fora, but is also increasingly reflected in the various operational activities for development addressed to African problems.

6. The success of ECA in political and strategic development, however, must be weighed against shortcomings in implementation. The structures of individual African economies have

historically exerted centrifugal forces which counteract attempts at regional and subregional integration. This tendency is being reinforced by discussions in some intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system which suggest that the problems of development can be reduced to national problems; and that regional development is simply a consequence of national development.

7. National development is the first priority of every member State. The economic realities of the African region, however, are such that no country can achieve national development without ensuring co-operation at the regional and subregional levels. The re-establishment of this essential component in Africa's progress is the task presently confronting the Commission.

I. THE PLACE OF REGIONAL COMMISSIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

8. The establishment of ECA and its sister commissions in Asia and Latin America was part of the decentralization process launched within the United Nations in the late 1950s. This process gained much of its momentum from the expansion in the membership of developing countries in the United Nations which was taking place at that time.

9. The General Assembly responded to its changed membership by a series of resolutions adopted with a view to restructuring the economic and social sectors of the Organization in such a way as to making them more responsive to the needs of its new members.

10. General Assembly resolution, aptly entitled "Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system", was adopted on 20 December 1977, and still provides the most comprehensive legislative statement to date of the role of the regional commissions.

Section IV of the Annex of resolution 32/197 specifically addressed the role of the regional commissions as intergovernmental bodies involved in policy-making at the regional level, and in inter-agency co-ordination. Briefly, the regional commissions were to be the

> "main general economic and social development centres within the United Nations system for their respective regions, they should exercise
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> "team leadership and responsibility for co-ordination at the regional level. They may convene periodic meetings, as necessary, for the purpose of improving the co-ordination of the relevant economic and social activities of the United Nations system in their respective regions."

12. Resolution 32/197 also opened the way for the commissions to play a role in the development and implementation of operational activities in the system by stating that

> "...the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should take measures to enable (the commissions) to function expeditiously as executing agencies for intersectoral, subregional, regional and interregional projects, and in areas which do not fall within the purview of the sectoral responsibilities of

specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, other subregional, regional and interregional projects".

13. This directive, hedged around by limitations as it was, came into force early in 1979 when, by its resolution 33/202, also entitled "Restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system", the General Assembly granted the regional commissions executing agency status "in their own right".

14. While the commissions had been left out in Section VI of 32/197, which involved the programming, planning, budgeting and evaluation of United Nations activities, resolution 33/202 also directed the Organization to strengthen co-operation with the commissions in the area of programme planning, and also in research and analysis; and to involve the executive secretaries in the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), the body which co-ordinates the activities of the secretariats of all entities in the United Nations system. All this was with the purpose of enabling the regional commissions to effectively exercise their responsibilities for co-ordination at the regional level, and to undertake measures to enhance interregional co-operation.

15. Resolution 32/197 also called for the necessary administrative delegation of authority and budget resources to enable the regional commissions to meet these responsibilities, and opened the possibility of redeploying functions and staff from headquarters units to the regional commissions.

II. THE COMMISSIONS TODAY

16. In retrospect, it has become increasingly clear that whatever the intentions of governments in legislating resolution 32/197, their efforts have not led to the desired level of integration of the regional dimension into the United Nations system. Indeed, over the past decade, the process of regionalization, and to a large extent the decentralization process itself, has gone into reverse.

17. The pressure to reduce the executing agency role of the commissions to one where only residual activities are left to them to execute, has increased as funding to the United Nations decreases, and competition among specialized agencies becomes more intense. Despite some relaxation over the past years, central control over recruitment of staff and procurement of equipment continues to affect that operational capacity the commissions still retain.

18. In turn, the other mandate of the commissions, to act as the regional co-ordinating bodies and team leaders of the system, is not respected by agencies of the system, and the unique benefits of geographical location that the regional bodies offer are not utilized.

19. Other directives of the resolutions have also not been observed. Far from the commissions becoming more involved in the programme planning of the system, as directed by 33/202, the regulations and rules governing programme planning were even further centralized through General Assembly resolutions 37/234 and 38/227. Uniformity has thus been

achieved, but at the cost of flexibility: a significant joint programming exercise between the Commission and a subregional intergovernmental organization, for example, could take up to two years to go into effect through the present programme budget mechanism.

20. Under Section VIII of resolution 32/197 which addresses secretariat support services, there has been major organizational growth at the global level, with the establishment of, inter alia, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), the Office of the Law of the Seas, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as a specialized agency responsible for the funding of its own operational activities. At the same time, funding and project execution have become concentrated at the centre. The Department for Technical Co-operation and Development (DTCD), which emanated from resolution 32/197 and is located at United Nations headquarters, now has seven to ten times the amount of money to spend in one year on grant-financed activities than have the largest executing organizations among the regional commissions (US$155,965,000, as against US$21,292,000 at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - ESCAP - and US$16,226,000 at ECA[1]).

21. Centralization has its price, and much time is spent within the system in developing new ways to respond flexibly to challenges. Such a challenge has recently appeared in the area of operational activities.

III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/211 - A NEW TURNING POINT?

22. The challenge to development assistance which occurred in the mid-1980s was precipitated at the political level. Briefly put, some developed countries, frustrated by what they considered to be the negligible impact produced by the billions of dollars spent on assistance over the past forty years, took the position that development was in future to be the responsibility of the developing countries themselves. Certain developing countries, on the other hand, made it clear that, if they were to be responsible for their own development, they should be given a greater say in the planning and execution of development projects carried out within their borders.

23. Major organizations of the system began to look at development strategies which would better integrate their mandated functions with their operational activities, and which would simplify and decentralize their structures. Among the aspects considered were the following:

a) Recognition of the sole responsibility of developing countries for elaborating national programme frameworks;

b) Recognition of the diversity of specific country situations;

c) Rationalization of the analysis that precedes country programming;

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[1] Table B-2, A/45/273/Add.4, "Operational activities of the United Nations system", 22 October 1990.

d) Rejection of the project approach, and closer alignment of general development objectives both with the programming process, and the mandates of the individual organizations.

24. When the General Assembly adopted resolution 44/211 of 22 December 1989, entitled "Comprehensive triennial review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", it sought to extend the decentralization of operational activities introduced by 32/197, although it ignored resolution 33/202 in the process. The essence of the resolution was

> "the delegation from headquarters (or regional) level to the country level, of various elements of authority for preparation and approval of operational programmes and projects for development at that country level, and the concomitant strengthening of the system's country-level capacities thereof"[2]

25. For ECA, this aim fits directly with the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action. However, while the resolution often alludes to functions which are inherent in the mandate of the regional commissions, such as multidisciplinary approaches, comprehensive planning, etc., it explicitly fails to deal with the regional dimensions of development in two ways:

a) From the viewpoint of the regional commissions, past development assistance has often failed because individual countries did not receive support from their environments---the neighbouring countries, economic blocs, subregional organizations, that could have facilitated their trade, absorbed their products, shared their resources, and begun the first tentative exchanges of people and technology that mark development in its take-off stages. Development among countries of the region was not made mutually self-reinforcing. By concentrating its efforts at the country level, implementation of resolution 44/211 threatens to repeat the mistakes of the past;

b) While plans for the decentralization of United Nations activities proceed apace, they are accompanied by equally strong efforts to centralize control functions (i.e., funding allocations, priority setting, planning, monitoring, and evaluation) at the headquarters of the various organizations involved. If carried through to its ultimate conclusion, the resulting structure will not be an innovative response to today's challenges, but instead will resemble something closer to that of the British empire in the nineteenth century.

26. Implementation of resolution 44/211 has been scheduled over a period of three years (1990-1992). It should be in place by the beginning of the programme cycles established by major funding agencies of the system. This period also coincides with the beginning of the implementation of the next medium-term plan of the United Nations secretariat, and thus with the implementation of the regular programme on "Regional Co-operation in Africa" to be implemented by ECA. The institutional implications for the commissions thus require considerable examination.

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[2] A/45/273/Add.5, para. 6.

27. Follow-up to resolution 44/211 has proven to be highly complex as organizational objectives have become inextricably entangled with the legitimate aspirations of member States, and already the estimated time of implementation has had to be extended.

28. Concerted efforts by the commissions have also resulted in an agreement with the Director-General for International and Economic Co-operation (DG/DIEC) to prepare a study on the regional dimensions of development. The 1990 report of the Director-General to ECOSOC on operational activities for development states (para. 178) that the study will be undertaken by the DG/DIEC in close collaboration with the regional commissions and with other organizations and agencies. Paragraph 179 of the same document states that, in his annual report for 1991, the DG/DIEC will bring to the attention of the General Assembly through ECOSOC the analysis and recommendations on the regional dimensions by CCSQ(OPS), together with his own views in the context of resolutions 32/197 and 44/211.

29. The study now encompasses the regional dimension of the entire United Nations system. It will therefore require the co-operation of all other organizations and agencies to reflect this widened scope. As desirable as such, a broad sweep may appear, however, it is questionable whether the basic point - the need for regional action through regional commissions - will not be diluted in this complex and time-consuming process.

30. ECA has undertaken a review of the implications of the resolution with its sister commissions. A joint position has now emerged which aims at preserving the central role of the commissions at the regional levels, as originally mandated.

31. In particular, the joint position has highlighted significant shortcomings which the commissions see in strategies based on the principles implicit in resolution 44/211. To sum up, these include:

a) The establishment of a structure in which decentralization to the country level is being negated by increasing centralization of control functions to the level of global headquarters;

b) The lack of a linkage between the country approach and regional objectives;

c) Absence of any serious consideration of regional aspects in any of the reviews and studies so far commissioned by the system;

d) Absence of any similar consideration in the agendas of the co-ordinating intergovernmental bodies of the system with regard to the follow-up of the resolution; and

e) Inconsistency between actions being taken, particularly in regard to the operationalization of multidisciplinary teams, and the mandates of the commissions as spelled out in resolution 32/197.

IV. THE CHALLENGE FOR ECA IN THE 1990S

32. Ultimately, the correct choices in United Nations development assistance will depend on how meaningful the decentralization process becomes. It is difficult to see how major decisions on the path of African development can be taken in headquarters located a day's jet flight away from the region.

33. Decentralization as a policy of the United Nations in the 1990s is something to be strongly supported: but an effective response of the United Nations system to the needs of the developing countries need not only be along the lines laid out in resolution 44/211. From three other aspects, the regional commissions are already more advanced in their decentralization strategies than other entities in the system are or can be. These three aspects are:

a) The regional commissions have been geographically decentralized for some thirty years - in the case of ECA, to the subregional level. Their contact with the regions in which they reside is unmatched by any other United Nations entity;

b) The staffing of organizations in the system can be looked upon as a function of their clientele. Recent studies by the Director-General for International and Economic co-operation, which were provided to the 45th session of the General Assembly, show that 78 percent of the staff of the regional commissions in operational activities (the Economic Commissions for Europe and Latin America excluded) are drawn from developing countries. By contrast, the average for the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), which comprises the main funding agencies of the United Nations system is only 48 per cent, a little over half as many[3]. Decentralization within the system as a mechanism for understanding the needs and aspirations of the developing countries is thus an established fact in the commissions, but is much less so in the entities which are now central to the United Nations' new development assistance strategies;

c) Decentralizing operations to the country level is intended to have an added benefit: the purchasing of project requirements at the local level, which should result in an improvement in indigenous business capacity. Local procurement is constrained by the limits of what can be procured locally. Because of the low level of development in the African region, ECA can give only limited support to indigenous industry. Nevertheless, when there is a chance, the commissions do indeed buy locally. For instance, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) makes 96 per cent of its procurement in developing countries. The average procurement from developing countries for all the commissions is 40 per cent[4]. The

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[3] A/45/273/Add.1, page 3.

[4] A/45/273/Add.4, page 33. An error in the table appears to put ESCAP's procurement in developing countries at 32.54 per cent, instead of 62.54 per cent. This causes a variation of only 7 per cent in the average for all commissions, however, and does not affect the general argument.

global agencies are in a position to buy anywhere in the world, and one would assume that their levels of developing country procurement would therefore be at least as high as the highest regional commission.

34. The figures actually show the reverse. According to the tables provided by the Director-General, the UNDP/OPS-UNFPA-UNICEF group procure only 24 per cent of their requirements in the developing countries, with UNFPA showing a low of 7.98 per cent - one-fifth of regional commission levels.

35. UNFPA policy in the African region illustrates the implications of the problem. At the present time, the intention of the agency is to close down the ECA-executed project on POPIN-AFRICA, a regional capacity-building project in the area of population information dissemination. Pending any new arrangements, the agency will provide major information support to Africa through POPLINE, a database produced and run from the United States of America. There is no doubt that the POPLINE system is technologically efficient. However, the objective of United Nations technical assistance is not production efficiency, but the establishment of self-reliance. The ECA secretariat believes that this shift in emphasis not only diverts operational resources from Africa, but will also make the region even more dependent on high technology imported from the developed countries.

36. In sum, decentralization as a strategy cannot be expected to work unless the headquarters of United Nations operational agencies are relocated to the countries they serve, and the concept of decentralization is internalized into the staffing, procedures and authority structures of the United Nations entities themselves. Such organizational change is a difficult and time-consuming process. It would appear to make sense, therefore, to implement such a strategy through those entities, such as the regional commissions, which have already adopted decentralization as a way of life.

V. REGIONAL STRATEGY IN AFRICA

37. In what areas is it logical to start from a regional approach? In what areas should the United Nations automatically look to the commmissions as a focal point for action?

38. Some areas which would define the regional dimensions of development are:

a) The majority of African countries are small, and unlikely to develop self-reliant economies without trade with, and support from, their neighbours. The situation is especially acute for the least-developed, landlocked and island developing countries. Subregional and regional community is an obvious and inevitable goal, and one which is receiving increasing importance with the approaching establishment of the African Economic Community in the 1990s. Technical assistance provided by the funding agencies of the United Nations system could have this as a major objective for development. On the contrary, however, the implementation of resolution 44/211 appears to be following a strategy of achieving African economic community by providing 51 African countries with independent roads to development, as major funding agencies move their increased resources to individual countries, while

decreasing their allocations to regional programmes. What mechanism other than regional integration is expected to move Africa forward?

b) Regional commissions have an important role to play in the international negotiations surrounding the stalemated Uruguay Round, and its subsequent effects on commodity agreements. This is especially an issue at the present time, there is an emerging trend toward the formation of regional trading blocs in Europe, the Americas, and parts of Asia, which threaten to isolate Africa from world markets;

c) Debt and development is another obvious area. In his statement to the last General Assembly, the Special Representative on Debt, Mr. Bettino Craxi referred to the need for systematic action with "the support - for each of the major indebted areas - namely Mediterranean Africa and the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia and East Europe - of the regional development banks and other multilateral bodies of regional dimensions...";

d) For ECA, the Special Programme on African Recovery which has now been adopted by the General Assembly as part of the United Nations Medium-term Plan, and the Plan of Action which is to be developed from it, is clearly an area where the Commission will have a dominant role within the region. Africa's unique needs of economic transformation and diversification require special focus on industrialization and technology, subregional food security and self-sufficiency, monetary unions and harmonization of export commodity policies. In no other organization can all these issues be dealt with under the same roof;

e) A distinctive feature of Lome 4 (ACP-EEC fourth ACP-EEC Convention..; provisional text and addendum, 1989) is its emphasis on the need to promote the co-ordination of structural adjustment on a regional basis. By ensuring that different ACP countries or groups are engaged in complementary activities, regional co-ordination avoids the export price problems associated with concerted producer action. It is presently unclear how this regional co-ordination will be implemented, and there is a broker's role needed between the ACP countries and the EEC to avoid the onset of conditionalities in Lome assistance;

f) Multidisciplinary work is not an area, but is a mechanism that the commissions use effectively. As a follow-up to resolution 44/211, certain funding agencies, including UNFPA, have begun to establish multidisciplinary teams unconnected with the existing infrastructure of the United Nations in the region. The legal mandate for the establishment of regional teams outside the mechanisms of the regional commission is questionable, and needs to be clarified. From a purely technical point of view, however, given the already highly specialized nature of population activities, it is also debatable how "multidisciplinary" these teams will be, particularly when compared to those established by ECA. A short description of ECA's new multidisciplinary team follows.

VI. ECA AND THE AFRICAN REGIONAL STRATEGY

39. One of the major challenges confronting ECA is the development of flexible, coherent solutions to problems that affect the entire region, particularly those related to the above dimensions---external debt, structural adjustment, trade in commodities, energy crises, and environmental degradation. These problems are often complex in nature; they have multidimensional implications; and, given the limited size and resources of many of Africa's countries, the co-operation of national sectors, neighbouring countries, and other groupings is often a necessity. The solutions must be long-lasting and must provide policy-makers with comprehensive responses, incorporating all the technical, economic and managerial aspects of the problem.

40. Accordingly, ECA has established a Multidisciplinary Regional Advisory Group (ECA-MRAG), a task force under the direct supervision and the overall leadership of the Executive Secretary. The Group is composed of senior experts, and is charged with strengthening the links between ECA's research and analysis, and their effects on African development. The wide spectrum of professional expertise and wealth of experience in the Group facilitates the process, while also allowing the policy maker to take into account the interdependence that exists among national, subregional and regional programmes and strategies. In pursuit of this, the Group:

a) Assists countries to translate regionally-agreed policies into practical strategies and programmes;

b) Provides multisectoral analyses of African needs in the priority areas, and time-bound strategies for achieving the objectives contained in those priorities;

c) Develops, with member States and subregional economic communities, annual programmes of multidisciplinary technical assistance;

d) Provides multidisciplinary technical assistance teams to African countries based on those programmes.

41. The composition of the Group varies depending on the problem being tackled. Experts are drawn from the areas of macro-economics; food and agriculture; development finance and debt management; public administration; statistics, and the application of national accounts to development; environment and development; energy development; social and human resource aspects of structural adjustment and transformation; and regional economic co-operation and integration.

42. ECA-MRAG also draws on the skills available in the substantive ECA divisions. These include nearly three hundred sectoral experts with extensive knowledge of Africa and its problems. These experts are organized into more than a dozen major programmes, thus making ECA the foremost multidisciplinary United Nations institution in the region.

43. The Group provides consulting and advisory services exclusively to member States and their intergovernmental organizations. Such services are made available to member States at no cost and can be requested at any time, depending on the work programme of the Group.

44. In providing advice, the Group responds to requests for help on problems that member States and intergovernmental organizations encounter in their efforts to transform their economies. The Group provides the requesting States or organization with a tentative assessment of the problem, a suggested work plan and framework for solving it, and the composition of the advisory team which would have to be involved. Because of the practical approach of the Group, advice is given within a specific time frame, with an agreed objective to be achieved by the end of that time. Where appropriate, the Group provides suggestions regarding possible future programmes of action, investment scenarios, etc.

45. The annual programme of ECA-MRAG is developed after initial consultations with member States, intergovernmental organizations, and other United Nations agencies at annual meetings of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs), which are located in the five subregions of Africa, and represent the legitimate institutional structure of the United Nations at the subegional level.

VII. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

46. The lack of influence of the commissions over present development policy in the system is in no small way due to the meagre amount of money which is provided for regional action. As the central funding agency for United Nations system operational activities, UNDP funding allocations provide a general indicator of the priority accorded to the commissions. It has to be acknowledged that considerable progress has been made by UNDP over the past years to strengthen the operational capacity of the regional commissions. Within the UNDP regional programme, ECA receives the highest allocation of any organization. However, it should also be recognized that a basic problem lies in the low priority given to regional activity as opposed to country activity in the Governing Council mechanism, and that the present state of regional programmes funded from UNDP is far from having reached a level commensurate with essential requirements.

47. During the fourth programming cycle, FAO received nearly 18 per cent of the overall allocations, and the United Nations (headquarters) received 11 per cent, while ECA led the regional commissions with just 0.97 per cent of the allocation. The average share of the allocation for four commissions (ECA,ECE, ECLAC, and ESCAP) totalled only 0.52 per cent[5]. Even this figure may be regarded as overstated, since "earmarked" money generally exceeds money actually committed by a considerable margin.

48. To obtain some sort of perspective on these figures, it should be pointed out that even a small country such as the Seychelles received US$23 million for its national indicative

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[5] UNDP Compendium of ongoing projects as of 31 December, 1989 (UNDP/Series A/No.20)

planning figure (IPF); Rwanda received US$35 million; and Malawi, US$61 million. Using the last case as an example, therefore, ECA receives half the allocation of one medium-sized country to develop regional community among 51 countries. Much of the problem may be structural. The criteria for apportioning the IPF are mainly limited by the choice of data: gross national product, population growth at the country level, etc., the importance of which in the African context has yet to be challenged relative to subregional and regional factors in structural transformation and integration. Whatever the reasons, however, if these figures are accurate, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the United Nations system is not convinced that regional action is an important factor in development.

VIII. PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

49. Action among the regional commissions has to be concentrated on two points. The first is the loss of legitimacy of, and respect for, regional mandates, as other agencies unilaterally develop regional programmes. Mandates must be clear and unambiguous with respect to subregional and regional issues in the United Nations system, and the benefits of the regional approach must be re-established in the minds of the international community.

50 The second is the loss of control of the commissions over their sources of funding, as not only specialized agencies, but also funding agencies, ignoring possible conflicts of interest, now become executing agencies.

51. Steps which may be taken, include the following:

a) The mandates provided in resolution 32/197 for the regional commissions should be updated by a new resolution, generated by the Economic and Social Council, and adopted by the General Assembly. Such a resolution would complement resolution 44/211, since it would put forward regional co-operation as an integral part of the United Nations development assistance, in which the commissions have a central role. That role should be explicitly and unambiguously defined;

b) In this respect, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation could be invited to explore the possibility of convening an ad hoc group of high-level experts during the second half of 1991 to discuss the revision of the mandate of the regional commissions, and to make recommendations to him on the matter. In particular, the role of the commissions as co-ordinating bodies of the system at the regional level should be re-examined;

c) As a part of the implementation of resolution 44/211, agencies of the United Nations system and of the United Nations secretariat involved in technical assistance should be invited to decentralize staff and establish joint units, sections or divisions with the secretariats of the regional commissions. Participation should be meaningful, and should not be limited to a token representation of one outposted officer. The present arrangement between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and ECA should be a model for such arrangements;

d) The funding mechanisms of the regional commissions should be reviewed. The United Nations system budget is now a finite one, and one that is shrinking in real terms. Those increased pledges which have been made to United Nations funding agencies have not represented an increase in resources to the regional commissions, because of the low priority given to them. The tremendous imbalance between United Nations technical assistance funds provided to headquarters entities and those provided to the commissions should also be reconsidered from the point of view of decentralization. If improvement is not possible under existing institutions, a separate global pledging arrangement should be established for the express purpose of funding regional co-operation.

52. The views of member States on the above issues are therefore invited.

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POPULATION INFORMATION PROGRAMME FOR ECA MEMBER STATES : PERSPECTIVES FOR THE 1990s

M91-580

INTRODUCTION

1. When the ECA secretariat embarked on population activities in 1961, the need to generate and appropriately disseminate population information throughout the region among different potential audiences was highlighted as one of the key means to bring about a greater awareness of population issues in the region. The secretariat's efforts in this area culminated in the establishment of a regional population information network in January 1984 to specifically handle the population information dissemination issues of the region as part of a global effort to improve the flow of population information and data on both regional and worldwide basis.

2. At the present stage in Africa's development, there is need for improved data and information to be made available and accessible, and the appropriate modalities have to be instituted to ensure such accessibility in the 1990s when there should be an improved flow of, and use of population and development information by intended users of the region. Efforts so far initiated by ECA need to be considerably intensified and resources found to continually support these. It is only when this is done that the region can hope to arrive at comparable levels of awareness of population issues to those already attained by the other United Nations regional commissions where highly motivated population programmes (including intensive population information activities) have been pursued since the 1970s. For as long as Africa remains at its present primitive level of population information activities, its capability to support the regional population and development programme itself is very much compromised. Population information dissemination activities in the region have to be brought up to levels capable of meeting the challenges of the 1990s.

3. The objective of this paper is to highlight the necessary mechanisms for developing a viable regional population information programme which will enable the African region to have the facilities and services for promoting the needed awareness creation and understanding of population and development issues which will be crucial for the region in the 1990s. The paper traces in section I the state of African population/development perspectives and discusses in section II the role that population information plays in this process. The development of population information dissemination activities since 1961 are reviewed, and an analysis of the present state of affairs, including a description of major activities already implemented also given. Section III highlights the main perspectives of a regional population information programme. The major elements of the proposed programme at different levels as well as the resources needed for implementation are indicated. Specific recommendations are addressed in section IV to member States to aggressively support the information programme and for donor agencies and institutions to support ECA in its efforts to develop, sustain and further develop its indigenous regional knowledge base on population matters in a manner which ensures the region's continued sustained growth in the population and development sector.

I. STATE OF POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN THE AFRICAN REGION

4. In order to place the region's population information concerns in proper perspective, it is important to review the population and development issues of the region which constitute the umbrella for population information activities and which themselves have undergone several transformations over the last two or three decades. In 1961, on the commencement of population activities by the Secretariat, most of the region did not perceive that Africa had any population problems to address. In fact, the ECA document "Status and prospects of population policies in ECA member States" (1989) notes that "following the attainment of political independence by the early 1960s, African countries mobilized resources and developed institutions consistent with the then prevailing conventional wisdom that economic development involves rapid increase of GNP per capita ...". (1) The preoccupation then was with economic growth indicators. By the end of the 1960s, however it became obvious that despite creditable output growth performances, the problems of poverty and unemployment were not being resolved due principally to the rapid growth rate of the populations of member States. This state of affairs had been brought about largely because of the imbalance between rapid mortality declines of the post-Second World War period and the relative non-decline in fertility levels.

5. The above realization was to lead to a transformation in the development strategy - one in which the provision of basic needs was emphasized for the 1970s. "The view was that if poverty was to be eliminated, policies and programmes should be directly aimed at providing jobs, education and health services...". (2) Many of the affected countries responded to this shift in strategy by instituting family planning programmes in a bid to moderate the rising rates of population growth. An interesting debate subsequently ensued in which the choice "was between dissipating the available scarce resources for the provision of basic needs and family planning services (as a component of national population programmes)."(3)

6. These debates led to further shifts in strategy in the 1980s with emphasis now being placed on "peoples's participation in the development process; mobilization of community resources; and, self-reliance to provide for the basic needs at the community level. Population concerns have since then been broadened from preoccupation with fertility reduction (as in the 1970s) to concerns about morbidity and mortality, family formation and status of women, population distribution and urbanization, internal and international migration and population structure." (4)

7. The decade of the 1980s was thus marked by an integrated approach to population and development issues in the region. Member States sought to undertake research, disseminate population information and data, strengthen their technical capacity and to engage in institution-building in an effort to integrate population factors into their development planning activities. However, since these efforts were undertaken in a rather ad hoc fashion and not appropriately coordinated or institutionalized within national development plans and structures, the overall desired objectives of effecting declines in fertility and subsequent reductions in population growth so as to eliminate poverty, unemployment and inequality could not be attained. The process of integrating population and development planning issues during the 1970-1980 decade will appear therefore, to have been hampered by a lack of understanding of the integration process, inadequate data and information, insufficient research, lack of trained and experienced personnel and limited awareness among planners and policy-makers on the interrelationships between population and development. These, then, are the needs yet to be addressed by member States in the 1990s.

8. While much positive change has occurred in government attitudes since the adoption of the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action on Population (KPA) in 1984, concern now is with the effective implementation of national population programmes intended to resolve some of the outstanding issues identified above. Countries now recognize the need to institute integrated population and development programmes in a bid to resolve their socio-economic development problems which continue to hamper their efforts to relinquish poverty and ensure sustainable development and growth at the national level. This positive development in attitudes is reflected in the number of African countries which have formally adopted national population policies as part of the strategy to address their development and population issues. The present figures indicate a total of 23.

9. Nonetheless, the mechanisms for bringing about the needed integration of population into development planning have yet to be mastered by member States. It is in the bid to provide the needed backing for implementing appropriate new strategies to attain the goals of integration that ECA, at the dawn of the 1990s, articulated measures to be taken by member States in the paper entitled "Population issues for ECA member States during the 1990s". (5) Endorsed by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its sixteenth session in 1990, the strategies call for specific actions to be implemented in five priority areas, namely socio-economic development and national population programmes; studies on population dynamics; integration of population variables and policies in development planning; data collection, training and research; and information dissemination. The paper calls on ECA member States to implement the recommended actions within their overall development strategy formulation. It is to be noted that the fifth priority area for attention in the 1990s is given as population information dissemination.

II. POPULATION INFORMATION ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. What is population information?

10. Since population information connotes different concepts to different audiences, it is important to define what the field is expected to cover. It is generally agreed that population information is concerned with the data and literature pertaining to demographic factors. The core area of knowledge that population information seeks to cover was actually defined by the Technical Task Force (TTF) (set up by the United Nations in 1976 to examine the need for a world-wide population information system) (6) as population data (that is, census and vital data) needed for measuring population structure, growth, trends and movements. It is this basic demographic data, together with the literature in which they are presented and analyzed, and in which the methodology used to supplement and interpret them is elaborated, which constitute the area which population information attempts to cover.

11. However, since other social and economic concerns impinge on this field, there is the increasing tendency to broaden the coverage of population information to cover more than the original basic demographic data and literature in order to cover population dynamics and related themes, dependent on the specific needs of countries. In the African region, where basic demographic data may be defective or even non-existent for some countries, recourse is increasingly made to identifying alternative sources of literature and documentation relating to the demographic profiles of member States in an effort to assemble some basic data and information for measuring population structure, size, composition, etc. The prevailing interests and needs in an ever-increasing number of African countries to implement population and development integration programmes require to be supported by more strengthened population information activities capable of generating, assembling, processing and disseminating the basic data and literature pertinent to these interests and needs.

12. These needs are, however, diversified and are subjected to change dependent on the concerns and developmental strategies pursued by respective countries. Therefore, while population information is concerned with the organization and dissemination of demographic data and the literature pertaining to them, the limits of the field will obviously be determined by individual national and regional needs. Consequently, while some countries may concentrate on family planning programmes and thus require data and information pertaining to such concerns, others may reckon urbanization and migration as their areas of interest and thus prefer to assemble data and literature on these themes.

B. The role of population information

13. In the ECA document referred to above outlining strategies for the 1990s, the following is noted about population information dissemination: "Success in integrating population factors into development planning depends upon creating an awareness of population problems at different levels of decision-making ... In this regard, a strategy should be instituted, if not already done, to strengthen existing population information, education and communication (IEC) programmes. Such programmes should be institutionalized so as to provide a continuous chain for collecting, processing and disseminating population information and messages relevant to population and development interrelationship within the overall national population programme". (7)

14. The role of population information in ECA's subprogramme on population was highlighted way back in 1979 in ECA resolution 366 (XIV) on integrated programmes on population, which requested the Executive Secretary "as part of the efforts for the creation of better awareness of population issues and their applications for socio-economic development, to expand and improve the activities of the secretariat in the field of population information and documentation in order to give better service including training in this field to the countries of the region." ECA resolution 400 (XV) of 1981 on priority population programmes of ECA further requested the Executive Secretary "to intensify the Commission's activities in the field of

population dissemination and documentation." The spirit of these resolutions was subsequently echoed in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), generally regarded as the blueprint for Africa's development from 1980 up to the year 2000, which had stated that "any population programme attempting to improve the quality of life should stand on a firm knowledge base that cover the most important social, economic and demographic factors related to the family." (8)

15. It was against this backdrop that the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action (KPA) also stipulated in 1984 specific actions to be taken to address the population information issues of the region. Among the four recommendations on population information is one which exhorts member States to "develop appropriate mechanisms for disseminating available demographic data to researchers, policy-makers, project officers and the general public. Countries should ensure that available demographic data are summarized and presented in forms that are easily understood by all sections of the population. Countries should strive to set up population information networks which provide an empirical base for project formulation, implementation and evaluation." (9)

16. It should be noted again that the call to ECA member States to address their population and development problems by instituting appropriate structures to resolve them (e.g., development of national population policies and programmes, etc.), also carries with it the inherent message that appropriate national channels for developing the national population knowledge base should be instituted as it serves as a crucial linkage in this developmental effort. This is in order, as it has been clearly demonstrated that successful population programmes rely on good population information, IEC programmes for their effectiveness. This explains, for example, why the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the largest funding agency in the area of population, puts a high premium on IEC activities and has placed them at the centre of its African strategy for assistance (1987).(10)

C. Implementation of population information activities since 1961

17. The ECA secretariat had been, and still is, motivated by the need to institute and develop long-term indigenous regional capacity, capable of ensuring sustainable development and growth of the information resources of the region. These efforts, perceived as part of a continuing process to develop appropriate regional structures and linkages will eventually provide a strong foundation for a regional knowledge base whose development itself is very much a function of the total development effort of the region as a whole. Developments in the area of population information dissemination in the African region fall under four developmental phases which are now described briefly below in order to indicate the progressive chain linking strategies and activities to date:

1. Phase I (1961-1976)

18. This phase corresponds to the stage when the ECA secretariat was beginning to develop its population activities. Information dissemination was conceived as part of this overall development, but information activities undertaken were largely ad hoc in nature. A small reference unit was developed for the Population Programme Centre (as the Population Division was then called) and the dissemination activities consisted of the distribution to member States of the technical reports and studies produced by the Centre. The World Population Plan of Action (WPPA)(11) of 1974 which recommended that efforts were to be intensified to improve the flow of population information and data, added impetus to these initial efforts at information dissemination at the Centre which, from 1970, had started producing the African Population Newsletter, as a disseminating tool to report on population activities in the region.

2. Phase 2 (1976-1983)

19. In 1976, the Centre attained the status of a full-fledged Population Division. With infrastructural support from UNFPA, the population information dissemination activities were subsequently expanded in

line with the recommendations of a UNFPA evaluation which, in 1978, had urged the provision of adequate information and clearing-house activities in order to create awareness of population issues in Africa so as to assist the economic and social development planning of governments. In its 1979 project proposal, the Division appropriately requested additional resources from UNFPA to strengthen the dissemination activities. Two staff posts were granted plus minimal funds to engage in some clearing-house activities for the distribution of the population information materials of the Division (technical reports and papers) throughout the region. The production of the African Population Newsletter was continued, and the first issue of the African Directory of Demographers was produced in 1978 in response to the needs of the African Conference of Demographers.

20. Influenced by other developments at the global level, namely the establishment of a global Population Information Network (POPIN) with headquarters within the Population Division (DIESA, New York), ECA started moves to establish a regional node of the global POPIN. In 1982, ECA called the first Consultative Meeting of POPIN-Africa in Addis Ababa at which participants endorsed the need to establish the Population Information Network for Africa (POPIN-Africa). In 1983, the second POPIN-Africa Consultative Meeting was held in New York to discuss the initial project proposal for POPIN-Africa and to sort out funding arrangements for the three year project. Attending that meeting were representatives from UNFPA, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Ottawa, Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and USAID. Also represented were the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), the Institut de formation et de recherche démographiques (IFORD), the Cairo Demographic Centre (CDC), the Sahel Institute and the Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS). Following the meeting, UNFPA agreed to fund the Coordinating Unit of POPIN-Africa while the IDRC indicated its willingness to assist RIPS, IFORD, CDC and the Sahel Institute to develop as components of the new regional network.

3. Phase 3 (1984-1987)

21. In January 1984 therefore, the new project POPIN-Africa was inaugurated with the long-term objectives of establishing "a network comprised of major population information services in Africa, which will provide ways of improving the flow of population information among institutions and organizations dealing with population related activities in Africa"; and "assisting in developing appropriate population information infrastructures in member States through advisory services including the training of librarians and documentalists for the collection, processing and dissemination of population information". (12)

22. The highlights of activities implemented during this phase under the POPIN-Africa project include:

(a) Efforts at regional networking which led to the organization of a training seminar/workshop on POPIN-Africa methodologies for input/output mechanisms, organized in Addis Ababa in 1986 for network members;

(b) The provision of documentation and referral services with the creation of a computerized regional database of bibliographic references and data established by the project in 1985, and maintained with inputs from the Coordinating Unit and the network's subregional/sectoral participating centres. This database, which represents the only indigenous regional population information database attempting to pull together the non-numerical information of relevance to the African region is used to generate the project's bibliographic journal of abstracts and indexes called POPINDEX-Africa, now in its sixth edition. Another database recently installed at the Coordinating Unit endeavours to store supplementary information on all pertinent population information which can be extracted from several external sources enabling POPIN-Africa to direct users' requests to appropriate sources and institutions both within and outside the region. The production of the monthly current awareness listing, Scanning Sheet (started in 1985), which comprises information of new population literature acquired at the Coordinating Unit has proved very useful to the user

clientele in the region in identifying pertinent source information on population literature needed to enable member States progressively develop appropriate documentation activities and national information knowledge bases;

(c) The initiation of a special programme called POPIN-Africa duplicates programme (POP-AF DUPS) in 1985 aimed at the re-distribution to African institutions and other interested persons of duplicate population documentation collected by the project, has contributed to the marked increase in the level of mailing and distribution of various population literature and documentation currently in the region;

(d) The project also inaugurated in 1986, the POPIN-Africa Country Bibliography Series in an effort to inventory the population information resources of ECA member States. So far, annotated country bibliographies, compiled by national experts and institutions have been prepared for Kenya (No. 1), the Sahel (No. 2), Ghana (No. 3), Ethiopia (No. 4) and Rwanda (No. 5). Still under preparation are bibliographies for Cameroon and Zimbabwe. These bibliographies have been found useful reference tools for alerting African researchers and policy-makers about available population literature;

(e) The Coordinating Unit prepared in 1986 and later revised in 1989 the Guidelines for the bibliographic description and analysis of population and family planning materials in Africa for the use of its network members in order to facilitate and standardize the processing of population information materials.

4. Phase 4 (1988-1991)

23. This phase marked the period when UNFPA, for the first time, approved funding of the POPIN-Africa project for four consecutive years (1988-1991). This had been done largely in recognition of UNFPA's own general satisfaction with the orientation and implementation of the project. While there was still much to be done to get national level activities operational, it was, nonetheless recognized that steady and continuing progress was being made in the implementation of the project. In fact, the approved work plan for the period envisioned an expansion in staffing and other resources for the project. Two additional professional posts were approved, thus placing at the disposal of the project, additional means to attain some of its set goals, namely to develop an integrated population information and documentation network for ECA member States in order to improve the flow of population information within the region, and to serve as a channel for providing vital population information support to policy-makers, planners, researchers and the like so as to create a greater awareness of population issues and facilitate their integration into socio-economic development plans. (13)

24. Some of the major activities implemented during this phase include:

(a) The organization of a Round-table Encounter on the dissemination of information on population issues among African journalists and media personnel. This Encounter, which took place in Dakar, Senegal, in 1988 was jointly hosted by PANA. Increasingly, the Coordinating Unit has been involving the African media and press in its efforts to disseminate public information in the region. An example of this effort was the meeting of the POPIN-Africa Working Group on Population Information Dissemination and Diffusion (PAWID) which the Coordinating Unit convened in 1989 to bring together population experts, mass communication experts and educators, population information and documentation specialists, etc., to discuss common problems related to population information dissemination in the African region;

(b) Close contacts have also been forged with the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations in Africa (URTNA) and the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS). Useful contacts are being maintained with the IPPF-Africa Region in order to have a channel to serve the population information needs of the family planning associations belonging to the IPPF-Africa Region;

(c) Improvements have been made in the publication activities of the project, both in terms of quality and quantity. This has thus made it possible for the Coordinating Unit of POPIN-Africa to more successfully engage in effective dissemination and distribution activities. The African Population Newsletter, published in English and French, now has wider coverage of African population concerns, highlighting in each issue, themes of urgent interest to the region. Feature articles dealing with special population-related issues are also now being produced on an ad hoc basis, aimed at informing the press and general African public about population issues. Since 1990, and in response to needs expressed by an increasingly interested African media for information about population and development issues, the project has also attempted to expand its activities in order to provide population information packages with the press and media needs in mind. POPIN-Africa is thus gradually becoming a major reference point for both technical and public information on population. A press clippings file and an accompanying new database have been developed, containing pertinent press-related information for use by the African media to write up stories, features, etc., pertinent to population issues in Africa. All these are being done in an effort to arouse consciousness about population issues;

(d) Much has also been done to facilitate access of potential users in the region to population information materials through expansion in the several institutional and individual listings maintained by the project. The current size of mailings undertaken by the project is now over 16,000 compared to only 1,900 in 1983;

(e) With the establishment of additional two new databases, the clearing-house activities have been further improved. The database on experts in African demography and population studies, has been used to generate the publication African Directory of Demographers. The other database, containing information on population-related institutions, programmes and projects in Africa ill be used to generate a source-book, Inventory of population institutions, programmes and projects in Africa, scheduled for publication in 1991;

(f) Efforts to stimulate interest in population issues and also to sensitize potential users to the use of the project's publications and services are periodically conducted. Book exhibitions and database demonstrations have been organized whenever possible, to coincide with major conferences and meetings in the region. A recent example was in 1990 at the last ECA Conference of Ministers of Planning and Economic Development held in Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya at which the project's databases were demonstrated;

(g) Currently, the Coordinating Unit is preparing a Handbook on the implementation of national population information centres in Africa which will help guide those member States interested in establishing national population information centres (NPICs) as a means of better organizing their national population data and literature.

D. Structure

25. As of now, the foundations of a regional network have been put in place with six subregional/sectoral participating centres (located in Accra, Arusha, Bamako, Cairo, Nairobi and Yaounde), and a Coordinating Unit located at the ECA secretariat in the Population Division. The work of the network is overseen by the POPIN-Africa Advisory Committee which meets on a biennial basis and whose work is supported by two working groups, namely POPIN-Africa Technical Working Group (PAT) which meets once every year; and the POPIN-Africa Working Group on Population Information Dissemination and Diffusion (PAWID), which meets on an ad hoc basis. At the national level, plans are in place to establish national participating centres (NPICs) but, as of now, there are no operational national nodes. The Coordinating Unit, however, collaborates with several national institutions. Recently at the third session (1990) of the Advisory Committee of the network, a decision was taken to institute another level of membership namely, associate membership in order to pull into the network, libraries, documentation centres and similar organs

in order to offer an additional channel for linkage and dissemination of population information and data in the region.

26. At the global level, POPIN-Africa constitutes the African regional node of the global Population Information Network (POPIN), instituted by the United Nations in 1979 as a decentralized network for the co-ordination of regional, national and non-governmental population information activities in order to facilitate the flow and exchange of population information and data on a world-wide base. At the inter-regional level, it collaborates closely with its counterpart regional networks in Asia (Asia-Pacific POPIN), Latin America (DOCPAL/IPALCA), the Middle East (the proposed PAPIN of the Arab League) and systems such as POPLINE (USA), the most comprehensive computerized bibliographic information system. At the regional level, POPIN-Africa bibliographic referral database forms part of the complementary files (PADIS-Com) of PADIS.

E. Resources

27. The funding of population information activities in the region had been on an ad hoc basis until 1984 when UNFPA approved funds for three years for the implementation of the POPIN-Africa project. This had been done within the context of the funding arrangements agreed to in New York at the meeting of the second POPIN-Africa Consultative Committee at which UNFPA, IDRC, CIDA (Canada), USAID and other interested agencies were represented. It will be recalled that UNFPA agreed to fund the Coordinating Unit of POPIN-Africa (located at the ECA secretariat), as well as national centres in member States (when these would be developed). It was expected that ECA would provide the necessary technical backstopping for the development of these centres while actual funding for the national level operations would be subsumed within national population programmes funded by UNFPA through its country offices.

28. POPIN-Africa is presently facing problems with the funding of its activities, particularly at the Coordinating Unit level. In 1988, UNFPA approved funds for implementing Coordinating Unit activities for four years; that is, up to the end of 1991 when the current phase will end. However, UNFPA has now approved funds for only six months of this last year of the current phase. This has put in serious jeopardy, the smooth implementation of the 1991 work programme, duly approved in October 1990 by the POPIN-Africa Advisory Committee at its third session held in Accra, Ghana. Additional to endorsing that the POPIN-Africa project should be continued, the Advisory Committee had approved the 1991 work plan and recommended among others, that:

(a) The subregional and sectoral participating centres of the Network should be adequately equipped to carry out their responsibilities as members of the network;

(b) Follow-up should be made towards the establishment of national population information centres (NPICs) and that ECA should encourage governments to establish national focal points for POPIN-Africa;

(c) The Coordinating Unit should take steps to expand activities adopting new technologies in information processing and utilization. It was also to forge closer collaboration and cooperation between ECA and the OAU in activities in the field of population information dissemination in Africa.

29. With the considerably reduced 1991 budget, only routine activities and a considerably reduced work programme can be implemented or maintained in 1991. Even after further discussions between ECA and UNFPA on the matter, it is unsure if the project will be funded beyond June 1991. UNFPA has requested that a users needs survey be conducted, and for its consultant to assist in preparing a new project proposal for 1992-1995 but whether, after all this, funding can be assured beyond 1992 is a matter of conjecture at this stage.

30. The funding of national level activities falls within the purview or jurisdiction of UNFPA country offices. When the POPIN-Africa Advisory Committee recommended at its second session in 1987 that NPICs should be developed at the rate of two centres per year, it had been expected that the funding of these centres would form part of the funding of IEC components within existing national population programmes funded by UNFPA. Though the POPIN-Africa Coordinating Unit has assisted in assessing the national population information needs and requirements and in preparing project proposals for Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Senegal, Nigeria, Zaire and Rwanda, none of the countries has as yet managed to secure funds from UNFPA or other funding sources for their POPIN-Africa related activities.

31. Within the same framework of shared financing arrangements, the IDRC had committed itself in 1983 to fund the operations of the subregional centres of the POPIN-Africa network. The CDC, IFORD and RESADOC (of the Sahel Institute) were subsequently supported by the IDRC to develop/strengthen their documentation-related activities as part of the overall development of POPIN-Africa. RIPS was unsuccessful in securing funds from the IDRC owing to changes in IDRC policy for funding population activities. The Centre for the African Family Studies (CAFS) (a POPIN-Africa sectoral participating centre) however, continues to enjoy some funding support from the Rockefeller Foundation.

32. As of now, however, IDRC funding has ceased for the three centres it supported. Since the parent institutions to which the centres belong are themselves experiencing precarious funding problems, it has not been possible for the direct costs relating to the implementation of POPIN-Africa activities at these centres to be borne by the institutes themselves. Some of the centres are thus in a very pitiable state regarding computer hardware equipment, books and population documents, personnel and other office equipment such as photocopiers needed to enable them to modernize their facilities and offer better services and support to their immediate clientele, the network and other users in the region, as originally planned.

33. From the foregoing, it is obvious that if the present precarious funding of the network components persist, it will become impossible to execute the regional population information network. The momentum for population programmes is accelerating in member States and the population information component should not be allowed to slow down this pace simply because there are inadequate resources to ensure continued implementation of the regional information network which will ensure population information and data for these countries. In fact, over the last year, a number of African countries have indicated their preparedness to set up national population information centres or to upgrade existing facilities to national nodes of the POPIN-Africa network. Examples of such countries are Cameroon, the Gambia, Nigeria, the United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zaire. As already indicated, Africa is lagging behind its regional counterparts in Asia and Latin America where successful regional population information programmes have been executed since the early 1970s leading to high levels of awareness of population issues in those regions.

F. Assessment of activities undertaken and impact so far made

34. An assessment of what has been achieved so far under the auspices of the POPIN-Africa project is best summed up in the report of a recent UNFPA independent evaluation team of experts which evaluated the project in July 1990. The assessment states as follows: "since its establishment in 1984, POPIN-Africa has achieved a commendable measure of success... The Coordinating Unit is now in a good position to build on its record of documentation activities, computerization, publications, information dissemination and network development. To its credit, the project has already achieved some degree of visibility in several of the countries visited by the mission, especially in anglophone Africa...". (14) This assessment by a group of independent experts bears good testimony to the efforts so far put into implementing a regional population information network.

35. Encouraging results have already begun to emerge as borne out by the increasing number of ECA member States which have formally requested participation in the network. Another indication of the impact

of ongoing population information dissemination activities is the volume of requests emanating from individuals (researchers, planners) and institutions in Africa for the publications, documentation services and assistance in training in information handling techniques. As noted in an earlier paragraph, the Coordinating Unit of POPIN-Africa is now making over 16,000 mailings to interested users annually. At an increasing rate, some of the agencies involved in aspects of information dissemination in the region have closely liaised with the regional network in an effort to learn more about each other's activities and to share information and data, as necessary. Examples are UNESCO/BREDA (for population education and communication), UAPS, an association of population professionals in Africa), IPPF/Africa Region and the Association of Chief Executives of Family Planning Associations in Africa (ACEFPA), PANA and URTNA.

G. The existing gaps

36. Despite the record of positive achievements, there are gaps which have to be filled if the region is to attain its goals in population information dissemination. The major identified gaps over the period include:

1. Establishment/development of national level activities

37. Though much preparatory work has been done in at least six member States of the ECA (Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Zaire), progress towards the actual operationalization of NPICs has been extremely slow. This problem should be addressed in all its seriousness since the effective dissemination of population information within the African region cannot be attained without operational national nodes.

38. Unfortunately, member States themselves have contributed to this state of affairs. It will appear that several member States are lethargic to the development of national population information facilities, centres, etc. Not much sustained interest and commitment has been demonstrated to incorporate the development of national population information knowledge bases and information systems into the implementation of national population programmes. Even in countries where population IEC programmes are in place, emphasis is largely placed on education and communication and population information continues to be the orphan.

39. Yet population education itself, whose raison-d'être is to assist in promoting better understanding and awareness of the nature, determinants and consequences of population processes and changes as well as the social implications of the population phenomena, among in-school and out-of school audiences, requires a solid base of the relevant national population data and literature which can aid this educational process. Population communication on the other hand, incorporates a range of activities which are aimed at presenting pertinent population information and data in appropriate messages and packages necessary to bring about attitudinal changes at both individual and societal levels. The use of the media is increasingly employed to aid this communication process which cannot be meaningfully and effectively pursued without appropriate base population data and information on respective countries.

40. It should be obvious therefore that population information is the source from which the attendant activities in population education and communication should draw. The three elements of IEC constitute a natural continuum and so more attention should also be directed to develop population information activities as part of the core supports for the successful execution of population IEC programmes in the region. Without the development of strong national population information knowledge bases, population education and communication programmes throughout the region will be severely handicapped since their information base will be very weak.

41. Provisions already exist for the implementation of effective IEC programmes and activities within all the emerging national population programmes and policies. More commitment, attention and resources

to the information sector will help member States to have the essential supports for the monitoring and evaluation activities to be implemented as part of their population/development integration programmes. Should member States articulate their needs for the development of national population information knowledge base/centres within such programmes, the funding of these activities could be subsumed under the existing structures for the implementation of population programmes. Accordingly, member States should begin seriously to address the question of population information (as part of IEC) and devise mechanisms for its institutionalization within ongoing programmes and projects. ECA will, of course continue to provide the needed technical backstopping for developing such national population information facilities.

2. Training and skills development

42. The needs in this area are critical to improving skills in population information handling capabilities and to producing a sufficiently trained corps which can deliver efficient services to the user clientele in the region. Training is still required in basic and advanced documentation, information networking skills, and also in technical writing and repackaging. Skills in computerization and in the application of advanced new information technologies to population information handling also need to be imparted on a progressive basis. The acquisition of these skills will eventually enable personnel of the network at the national, subregional and regional levels to clearly perceive and analyze problems and institute new forms of information service in order to meet new and emerging user demands in the region. Over time, specialized skills in the repackaging of population information and data to suit an ever-increasing clientele of planners, policy-makers, researchers and the general public will be required. The region at the moment lacks trained personnel (both in quantity and quality) who can identify, collect, process and disseminate the expected increased volume of population information and data needed at the national level to support the population and development integration programmes. The provision of training and skills development had been underscored as one of the recommendations of the KPA in order to develop, over time, a corps of trained personnel for the region. Intensified efforts should therefore be made now to fill this gap.

III. POPULATION INFORMATION PERSPECTIVES OF THE 1990s: THE CHALLENGES

43. In the preceding paragraphs, the several transformations undergone by the region over the last decades have been highlighted. Taking off from the 1980s, and strengthened by the new positive attitudes of member States, the 1990s should prove a challenging decade during which a more dynamic, comprehensive and well-coordinated population information programme could be developed to serve as the effective information and communication arm of the overall regional population programme. In this new era, when the formulation and implementation of comprehensive population policies are expected to be on the ascendancy, an increased role for population information could help to stimulate and bring policy-makers and development planners to a new level of awareness and understanding of the implications that population issues have on the development planning process at the national level.

44. As of now, the basic foundations of a regional population information network have been laid. This, along with other identified population information resources (including population communication programmes) in the region, could be streamlined to better serve the region's needs within a more co-ordinated regional information programme. In order to rationalize the development of the proposed programme, the following should be taken into serious consideration:

(a) The necessity to consolidate and expand current POPIN-Africa operations in order to better assist actual and potential users in governmental, institutional, university and other sectors to obtain the population information that they need for their work;

(b) Consolidate gains already made by the POPIN-Africa project in order to further expand the regional information knowledge base and develop additional databases, as needed, to create increased

capacity to collect, organize, repackage and disseminate population information at national, subregional and regional levels;

(c) Necessity to make more concerted efforts to develop national population knowledge bases in ECA member States;

(d) Urgent need for training to upgrade the technical skills and expertise of the manpower responsible for managing the network's operations at different levels. The preparation of guides, manuals, handbooks should constitute a major feature of the training effort;

(e) Necessity to cultivate a user corps in a wide variety of governmental, commercial, media, grass-roots and other institutions for which up-to-date population information and data is, or should be, an input in their work;

(f) Need to reduce duplication of effort by actively collaborating with other agencies involved in population information dissemination in the region (e.g., UNESCO/BREDA, UNFPA country offices, etc.). The goal of regional indigenous capacity-building should not be compromised through such collaboration, especially with agencies outside the African region which could assist such development subregional centres of excellence should be closely involved, and their resources and facilities utilized to strengthen the proposed population information programme.

A. Strategy

45. Against the above considerations, therefore, the proposed PIPA will comprise the following programme elements:

(a) Documentation, information handling and clearinghouse;

(b) Publications and public information;

(c) Training and advisory services in population information;

(d) A regional population information network (POPIN-Africa) (the foundations for this have already been laid by the POPIN-Africa project and this could be used to serve as the nucleus for any further required actions).

46. The overall strategy is intended to re-formulate present activities, institute new structures or link up with other operational activities/projects/programmes in the African region to ensure the effective implementation of the regional population information programme. The specific activities to be implemented as part of this strategy will be worked out at a later stage in consultation with interested agencies and institutions which could facilitate the attainment of the goals of the programme. In the long run, the strategy will allow for the linkage in a regional network of the separate country activities in the area of population information in a manner which makes information-sharing a viable and profitable proposition for Africa. The development of this regional information network will constitute one of the major means to attain the overall goal of the programme, that is to improve the flow of population information and data in the region. Full advantage will be taken of new improvements in information technology and transfer to develop an efficient regional knowledge-base of relevance to the African region. A Population Information Unit will be established within the Population Division of ECA to facilitate the implementation of the regional information programme.

B. Structure and functions

47. For the programme's effective implementation, it is foreseen that separate, custom-made, but complementary activities will be undertaken at the national, subregional and regional levels. An indication of the three-tier structure of the programme and some of the intended activities are described briefly below:

1. At the national level

48. The national level, which will constitute the key building block in the overall regional programme, will comprise sub-units or focal points made up of national population planning units, university population programmes, statistical offices, libraries and documentation centres and other similar institutions at the national level. Each interested member State will be expected to develop a structure/mechanism/ or linkages which will enable it to collect, process and disseminate the national information and data on population issues for the purpose of creating the national knowledge base. As much as possible these national knowledge bases should be closely linked to, or be integrated into existing or planned IEC programmes in order to constitute a comprehensive package of information services to member States.

49. The Population Information Unit at ECA will help the national focal point(s) or units to organize themselves, and to pull together their total resources so as to consolidate over time a national network. The eventual structure and linkages for each national operation will, however, be determined by the national exigencies, characteristics and needs of each country. Close liaison will be maintained with the UNFPA country offices and the central coordinating bodies for population affairs in member States.

50. Among the functions to be performed by the national information centres are disseminating bibliographic information (including the collection and processing of information) by liaising closely with national bodies which generate/analyze population data and information, identifying sources of, processing population information, promoting the sharing of numerical data (where available), generation of users, providing technical assistance and training for collaborating units, and promoting the use of the facilities of the centre/network. Depending on the level of infrastructural development of member States, national networks could take considerable time to evolve.

2. At the subregional level

51. Units at the subregional level will be promoted to serve as major catalysts to facilitate the formation of national units/ centres/networks. Their main functions relating to the establishment of national level operations will include the provision of training through subregional or sector-specific training workshops; visiting countries in their subregions to provide technical assistance and general guidance in the creation and operation of national centres/networks; disseminating bibliographic information and data at the sub-regional level; and serving as a liaison between the national and regional components of the overall regional programme and network.

52. Over time, as the national components of the regional network themselves develop and become stronger, the subregional centres could become focal points for re-organizing the national centres/networks into special interest networks of direct relevance to the work of the subregion in a manner which promotes sub-regional cooperation and development. The role of ECA's Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) located in ECA's five subregions will be useful since they can also serve as additional buttresses at the subregional level. The existing documentation facilities at some of the subregional training institutions (e.g., RIPS, IFORD, etc.) will be further expanded and modernized to serve as inputs into the regional programme, as they have been doing, as of now. However, such subregional developments will take a while to evolve since they largely depend on the readiness of individual national centres and units to "network". The network coordination of 51 member States is an arduous task, hence the early development of subregional groupings would be encouraged as part of the overall strategy.

3. At the regional level

53. PIPA will be executed by the ECA Population Information Unit which will be responsible for coordinating the activities to be implemented within the programme. The major functions of the Population Information Unit will be comprised of developing and maintaining regional population information referral files covering special interest areas (population literature and data, population experts, institutions, projects/programmes, etc.); producing and distributing population information materials of interest to identified users of the region; and serving as the coordinator and regional focal point for the regional population information network (POPIN-Africa) ensuring its development into a network capable of meeting the region's needs.

54. The Unit will accordingly link with other agencies and institutions, both within and outside the region, to facilitate the successful implementation of PIPA. In this context, it is foreseen that close collaboration will be sought with UNESCO/BREDA (engaged in population education activities in the region); with URTNA and PANA, both engaged in communication activities in the region; with professional groups in the region such as UAPS and similar bodies engaged in professional population-related activities in the region, which could utilize the outputs and services provided through the programme. In particular, efforts will be made to link up with UNESCO/BREDA where a regional clearinghouse for IEC activities is expected to be developed. This will ensure maximum cooperation between the present population information activities of ECA and the proposed complementary ones in IEC under development at UNESCO/ BREDA. The Unit will also maintain collaboration links with global POPIN to strengthen the region's population information activities.

C. Resources and time-table for the phased development of the programme

55. In order to effectively implement the programme outlined above, adequate and continuing resources have to be made available. ECA will have to seriously consider absorbing some of the costs of implementing the regional information programme under its regular budget allocations, on a progressive basis. This will not only ensure that core programme activities continue uninterrupted, but also that this information component is duly incorporated into the Population Division's work programme, of which it forms a part. Equally, ECA member States should call upon agencies like UNFPA, IDRC, USAID, CIDA and other donor agencies and countries to help provide needed extra-budgetary resources on multilateral and bilateral basis to support PIPA.

56. However, apart from the funds which will be required to implement the programme, an equally crucial input to ensuring a successful programme will be the commitment on the part of member States themselves to support the goals of the programme, conscious of the fact that the region needs such a programme to strengthen the realization and effectiveness of its regional population and development aspirations in the 1990s and beyond.

57. In order to ensure the successful restructuring and smooth transition from the present project activities of POPIN-Africa to a progressively full-fledged information subprogramme within the ECA regional population programme, the following steps and time-table are recommended:

1. Preparatory phase (July - December 1991)

58. A minimum period of six months will be required to make preparatory arrangements towards the conversion of the present POPIN-Africa Coordinating Unit into a regular unit within the ECA Population Division. This unit, namely the Population Information Unit, will be supervised by a chief of unit, who will oversee the overall coordination and implementation of the planned activities connected with the development of the regional population information programme. The work of the unit will be under the direction of the Chief of the Population Division. While ECA takes over the cost of the chief of the new Population

Information Unit and one or two support staff (one secretary and one documentation/research assistant), multilateral and bilateral donors will be approached to support the implementation of identified elements of the programme, as already spelt out under A. above.

59. A new comprehensive project proposal or separate proposals will be developed during this preparatory phase aimed at mobilizing the needed resources to implement the three components of PIPA. Temporary resources will be required to pay for the present staff and to continue with operations (preparation of newsletters, bibliographies, directories, databases, training, etc.) during this preparatory phase pending such time that PIPA could be fully launched in 1992. Without such measures, there will be serious disruptions to planned operations which will not only affect the take-off for the programme, but also frustrate users in the region who require these outputs and services for their work in development planning.

2. Initial phase (1992-1993)

60. Following the re-structuring and the reorganization of present operations which would have taken place during the preparatory phase (six months), this biennium will concentrate efforts on the following

(a) Documentation, information handling and clearinghouse

61. The present documentation activities (including computerization, introduction of information technology developments for information handling, etc.) will be pulled together, strengthened and properly coordinated so as to better support documentation and information handling operations of member States participating in the regional programme and network. The projected expansion in population documentation and clearinghouse activities of the programme will be planned in a manner flexible enough to accommodate the realistic levels of development of information handling and infrastructures in the region. The Reference Centre, currently operated by the POPIN-Africa Coordinating Unit will be expanded and structured as the Regional Population Documentation Centre (RPDC) serving the literature and information needs of population-related institutions, libraries, documentation centres dealing with population information in Africa. RPDC's role will be crucial to the further expansion and development of bibliographic databases and the establishment of appropriate special, referral databases to serve the emerging needs of the region.

62. Intensified users' services, closely linked with national and subregional operations, will be pursued to ensure that adequate documents back-up is provided for the national centres/networks. A mechanism will be instituted to facilitate the process of answering users' requests at all levels of the programme in order to avoid duplication and maximize resources. Information packages (on diskettes and other electronic formats) will be made available to interested users. Appropriate guides to literature and sources of information and similar aides to assist the different categories of users in the region will be prepared and utilized to encourage better use of available population literature and data among target audiences. Resources needed for implementing this component of the programme will include one documentation specialist, one population information officer (users), one assistant documentation officer and requisite sub-professional, technical and support staff (to assist with development of databases (both bibliographic and numerical), technical processing of documents, indexing, abstracting, data entry and related functions).

63. Extrabudgetary resources from interested donors will be sought to cover the costs of documentation, information handling and clearinghouse services. Dependent on the volume of the resources mobilized, it should be possible by the end of this initial phase to develop a strong comprehensive RPDC, linked to strong national and subregional population documentation centres and networks and serving the needs of users through intensified clearinghouse activities.

(b) Publications and public information

64. The anticipated increased activities projected for PIPA will generate several types of publications (reports, technical papers, bibliographies, newsletters, etc.). Additional to formal publications, repackaged information in the form of feature articles, special theme presentations geared at the general public for public information on African population issues are also expected to be prepared. The distribution of requisite publications (both published in-house and outside) will therefore be intensified to accommodate current and potential users whose needs would be closely monitored. Appropriate communication and distribution mechanisms will be instituted to ensure that identified users are continually served with population documentation and literature as needed.

65. In order to implement the above, extrabudgetary resources will be needed to recruit one publications/press information officer and requisite technical and administrative support staff.

(c) Training and advisory services in population information

66. The extent to which PIPA will be able to carry on its operations efficiently and effectively will depend, to a large extent, on the quality of the available manpower to implement given tasks and responsibilities. As indicated in earlier sections of this paper, the poor manpower base constitutes a weak link which has to be considerably improved to ensure a core of personnel capable of understanding, and of adopting new techniques for the handling of population information and data.

67. Accordingly, an intensified training programme which will comprise on-site training, workshops/seminars, attachments and study tours will be pursued as appropriate. Training materials and guides geared at imparting appropriate skills in population documentation will be prepared and made available to support the training programme. The major beneficiaries of the training effort will be personnel at the national centres/networks, where the need is greatest.

68. It is planned, therefore, that at an early stage during the initial phase of the programme, a training seminar/workshop on methodologies for information handling of population information materials, will be organized for interested member States in 1992. Depending on the response to this effort, a similar one will be organized in 1993. Training will cover aspects such as computerization of population documentation, establishment and management of national databases on population, as pertinent to the needs of member States. Apart from these formalized training programmes, on-site training and other informal means will be used to impart the needed skills and expertise to those needing such supports. Opportunities for training will also be sought through the training services offered at ECA by PADIS, as necessary. As and when possible (depending on resources), it will be arranged, through interregional and other similar cooperation, for appropriate manpower in the region to be exposed to more advanced schemes in population information handling outside the African region, especially among global POPIN members.

69. Resources for the training and related advisory services will be sought from interested donor agencies and countries (e.g., IDRC, SIDA, JOICFP, etc.). Training activities will be coordinated by the chief of the Population Information Unit who will identify the training needs and requirements and devise appropriate schemes to address such needs for member States, after due consultations with them.

(d) Regional population information network (POPIN-Africa)

70. A regional population information network made up of all the national and subregional networks, each with its own focal point(s) and participating institutions will be established. The activities/services outlined earlier on will feed the regional information network serving as the props upon which POPIN-Africa will stand. In effect, POPIN-Africa will serve as the concrete demonstration of the region's efforts to organize and share population information. As member States develop their national centres or networks,

they will be invited to participate in the regional decentralized network whose eventual goal will be to facilitate the flow and exchange of population information and data in the region, as recommended by the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA), the KPA, and as exemplified in the global Population Information Network (POPIN), of which POPIN-Africa is a part.

71. It is expected, however, that as member States attain more self-sufficiency in implementing national population activities, the role and functions of the regional coordinating unit or centre will be kept to a minimum (e.g., organizing general regional meetings once so often to bring members of the network together to discuss common issues, for example, information sharing, technical backstopping, training and a regional clearinghouse).

72. During the biennium, the criteria for participation by subregional and national participating nodes will be defined and steps taken to establish strong operational nodes. The Population Information Unit of the Population Division which will serve as the secretariat or coordinating centre for the regional network will monitor the network's development and provide guidance as needed. However, it is perceived that the development of POPIN-Africa as a network will be a long and arduous one, bearing in mind the current levels of population information handling and networking in the African region.

73. In the course of the biennium, therefore, special efforts will be made to better inform member States about the advantages and benefits to be derived through participation in POPIN-Africa. At this stage, it is not anticipated that a full-fledged network, with well developed national and subregional components would have emerged by the end of the biennium. In fact, given present circumstances, the fully operational network could take a minimum of ten years to attain levels where information-sharing and exchange, an improved flow of population information and data; and eventually greater awareness of population issues would have been achieved for the region. The experiences of the Asia-Pacific and the Latin American Regions bear testimony to this slow process in information networking in developing countries.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

74. In view of the foregoing, the following specific recommendations are made:

(a) To ECA member States

(i) member States should aggressively support the strategies and programme outlined above;

(ii) member States should institute the machineries at the national level necessary for operationalizing national population information centres/units/networks, as appropriate to their circumstances, as recommended in the KPA in 1984, and as contribution to the regional programme (PIPA) and network (POPIN-Africa);

(iii) member States should support ECA's efforts to raise adequate and continued financial and other resources by urging UNFPA, IDRC, CIDA, USAID and other bilateral donors to help the region to attain its ultimate goals. Interested donors should be made to appreciate the critical needs of the African region to develop/strengthen the weak information infrastructures which presently pose problems to building effective and efficient national population information knowledge bases which will serve as inputs to the region's development and population programmes;

(iv) member States should authorize the ECA secretariat to initiate steps to absorb some of the budgetary requirements on a progressive regular basis so as to minimize disruptions in the execution of the proposed programme.

(b) To donor countries/institutions

(i) should sympathetically view the magnitude of the population information problems of the African region and provide adequate long-term financial and other supports which could help transform the present information backwardness of the region. They should bear in mind, as was noted in the IDRC's Information Strategy for Africa, that "information activities are an aid activity, and should be as much a priority as, for example, research projects"; (15)

(ii) UNFPA, either separately or in collaboration with other interested donor institutions, should consider instituting a special fund for Africa, out of which the costs of training and skills development and other critical needs could be met. This would be one of the fastest means to bring the Region to the same levels as those already attained in the other regions. A donors meeting could serve to realize the needed resources;

(iii) IDRC, CIDA, USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, JOICFP, the African Development Bank, SIDA and other interested donor countries and agencies are specifically called upon to assist the region's efforts by making appropriate grants and resources available to implement PIPA.

V. CONCLUSION

76. It is our firm conviction that the activities outlined above will help bring to reality, a viable, decentralized African regional population information programme that will stimulate national interest in the impact of population issues on economic development, and also create national information knowledge bases and information systems that can adequately respond to the population information needs of national policy and programme decision makers. Through this programme it is anticipated that population information will become more accessible not only to the national centres participating in the network but also to those institutions, individuals and the media that use these resources as inputs in their own work. The regional information network/programme would thus become an effective instrument to help integrate population into development plans and programmes.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE UTILIZATION OF UNTFAD RESOURCES IN 1989 AND 1990

M91_99

INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Trust Fund for African Development (UNTFAD) is now almost four years since its inception by the Secretary-General of United Nations in consultation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

2. The rationale behind its establishment is now well known and rehearsed through the previous pledging conferences. The outstanding single motivation is the need for African countries to make a conscious effort through the spirit of self-reliance, to contribute towards the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for self-sustaining growth. Over the years however the regional needs have not only expanded but also assumed new dimensions and complexity.

3. The 1980's for instance, described by many of the region's economists as, "a lost decade" witnessed one of the worst economic and social crisis in history. Per capita income fell by 1.7 per cent yearly, gross fixed capital formation by 1.9 per cent, export volumes by 2.7 per cent, import volume by 3 per cent, commodity prices by 3.1 per cent while unemployment increased four times faster than in the 1970's. [1]

4. It is against such a background for the 1980's that compelled the Secretary-General of the United Nations to call upon the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly to adopt special measures for social and economic recovery for the African region. Among the measures considered were the adoption of resolution 37/139 whereby the General Assembly invited donor countries to "provide substantial and sustained levels of resources for promoting the accelerated development of African countries and the effective implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action and contribute generously to UNTFAD". The economic strategies adopted since the mid-eighties were intended to meet the regional priority areas as spelled out in the United Nations Programme for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD). However, since then, it has become clearer that development goals in the 1990s would have to be oriented towards not only recovery but also to restructuring and transformation. This orientation has resulted in the adoption of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio and Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP).

5. The basic thrust of African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP) is to provide a framework which allows adjustment programmes non-disruptive to the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA).

6. The outlook for this decade increasingly shows that African countries have to strive hard to seek internal solutions to the economic crisis. One area which will call for more attention to this inward search for solution is the mobilization of resources. External resources will most likely experience relative decrease as a result of impending single European market. Already large volumes of resources are actually or planned for diversion away from the traditional third world beneficiaries and channelled to new demands particularly of Eastern Europe. Thus UNTFAD as a vital funding source for the coming years has assumed new prominence.

7. It is against this background that the current pledging conference has to be situated. A pledging conference in which so much is expected if mounting needs has to be met and yet a conference taking place at a time when most African countries are still going through the economic crisis.

I. STATUS OF PLEDGING CONTRIBUTIONS AND THEIR PAYMENTS

8. Table 1 shows the seven pledging conferences that have taken place since the establishment of UNTFAD during which contributions have been pledged and subsequent payments made:

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[1] Economic Report on Africa, UNECA, Addis Ababa, 1990.

Table 1

	Pledges	Payments	Percent paid
Lagos, April 1977	2,960,981	2,940,981	99
Rabat, March 1979	2,285,762	1,762,570	77
Addis Ababa, April 1981	1,790,750	1,070,756	60
Addis Ababa, April 1983	1,833,240	1,596,749	87
Addis Ababa, April 1985	2,161,606	1,576,102	73
Addis Ababa, April 1987	449,650	425,789	94
Addis Ababa, April 1989	664,528[2]	147,050	22
Total	12,542,882		

9. Table 2 shows the total amount of $US 12,542,882 contributed to UNTFAD over the years which includes not only pledges made by African countries but also paid up pledges by other countries.

Table 2

China	51,020
Columbia	2,040
Cyprus	1,100
Federal Republic of Germany	286,000
India	1,350,000
France	71,429
African Development Bank	250,000
Carnegie Foundation	176,000
Sub-total	2,253,589

10. It should be noted that the total contributions to UNTFAD have been decreasing over the years as evident from the figures given in table 1. Payments have similarly not been made as promptly for the subsequent pledged contributions.

11. Regarding the actual payments made from the pledges to UNTFAD, the situation is indicated in tables (3) and (4).

12. The pattern of contribution of each member country show that even countries which started enthusiastically by making relatively large contributions have over the period slackened. Although the list of countries pledging has expanded the total contributions has nevertheless declined. The trend of the pledged contributions demonstrate one major indice, that of growing economic incapacity for many countries.

13. Regarding the actual payments made from the pledges to UNTFAD, the situation is as follows:

[2] Include $US 15,100 pledged and paid by Ethiopian Government in kind.

Table 3 shows countries/institutions that have paid the total amount of the contributions they pledged.

Table 3

	Country	Amount paid ($US)
1.	Algeria	500,000
2.	Burkina Faso	1,775
3.	Cape Verde	2,000
4.	Egypt	901,428
5.	Ethiopia [3]	102,882
6.	The Gambia	5,000
7.	Mauritania	31,742
8.	Mauritius	30,000
9.	Somalia	30,000
10.	Swaziland	1,776
11.	Tunisia	107,320
12.	Uganda	11,902
13.	China	51,020
14.	Federal Republic of Germany	286,000
15.	Columbia	2,040
16.	African Development Bank	250,000
17.	Gabon	131,052
18.	Nigeria	2,241,509
19.	Zimbabwe	179,744
20.	Rwanda	75,000
21.	Botswana	50,851.85
22.	Malawi	2,000.00

[3] Includes $US 15,000 pledged contribution in kind during 1990/1991.

Table 4 shows countries/institutions that have paid only part of the contributions they pledged.

Table 4

Amount	Total pledges	Amount paid	Amount due
Benin	51,000	40,500	10,500
Burundi	54,815	33,367	21,447
Cameroon	362,194	257,521	104,672
Central African Republic	23,966	21,524	2,441
Congo	113,333	86,508	26,824
Chad	20,000		20,000
Equatorial Guinea	2,000	-	2,000
Guinea	66,043	61,042	5,000
Guinea Bissau	6,521	595	5,926
Ghana	149,877	114,877	35,000
Kenya	305,509	51,503	254,005
Liberia	40,000	35,579	4,420
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	630,000	530,000	100,000
Lesotho	77,744	38,872	38,872
Mali	50,000	4,346	45,654
Morocco	1,000,000	200,000	800,000
Niger	36,529	26,001	10,528
Sao Tome & Principe	5,000		5,000
Senegal	179,000	163,967	15,440
Sierra Leone	110,000	61,306	48,694
United Republic of Tanzania	307,886	156,087	151,799
Togo	68,170	57,181	10,989
Zaire	622,045	611,545	10,500
Zambia	157,687	142,687	15,000
Sudan	55,000	50,000	5,000
India	1,350,000	1,149,199	200,801
France	71,429		71,429
Columbia	2,040	1,000	1,040
Carnegie Foundation	176,000	41,400	134,600
ECA Staff Association	40,000	15,000	25,000
Cyprus	2,000	1,000	1,000
Rwanda	70,500	40,500	30,000

14. The countries listed in this category have so far not been in a position to pledge; Angola, Comoros, Djibouti, Madagascar, Mozambique and Seychelles, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia.

II. UTILIZATION OF UNTFAD RESOURCES

15. During the period 1989-1990 resources utilized to finance projects activities amounted to 1,283,084. The funds utilized represent the balance of prior year contributions from the payments effected in 1988 and 1989 and from part of the accumulated interests accrued under UNTFAD's general and specific accounts.

16. During the period under review, the ECA secretariat has made a very cautious use of UNTFAD resources. Given the decline in the overall pledged contributions to UNTFAD over the recent pledging sessions the Executive Secretary of ECA has maintained a strict surveillance to ensure that all projects proposals for financing under the extra-budgetary resources entrusted to ECA and especially UNTFAD undergo thorough scrutiny within the established mechanisms and using appropriate instruments including a special committee chaired by the Executive Secretary himself.

17. It is within this context that funds could be released from UNTFAD resources to finance the following operational projects related to ECA programme of work and priorities.

A. Agriculture

(a) Regional workshop on evaluation of experiences of ten rural development projects in Africa (ATF/001/049)

17. This project is aimed at undertaking an in-depth evaluation of ten rural development projects in Africa. Through a workshop, the findings would be disseminated among member States and a framework would be devised for future planning and implementation of rural development projects.

18. The estimated cost of the project is $US 221,785.

(b) Subregional workshop on control of locust and grasshoppers in West Africa (AFT/002/058)

19. The project is designed to mobilize human institutional and technical capabilities in the countries of the subregion most seriously affected by locust through exchange of information, review and co-ordination of activities.

20. The estimated cost of the project is $US 42,583.

(c) Workshop on prevention of post-harvest food losses in North Africa (ATF/002/60)

21. The objective of the workshop is to promote the marketing information extension services between the countries of the subregion. The other aspect of the project is to conduct a study on the improvement and utilization and marketing of fish in North Africa.

22. The cost of the project is $US 39,000.

B. PADIS

(a) Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS/CENTRAL AFRICA (ATF/002/047)

23. The project is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Central African Documentation and Information Centre System (CADIS).

24. Estimated cost is $US 33,419.

C. NATURAL RESOURCES

(a) Inventory of mineral resources in Africa (ATF/002/57

25. The project aims at undertaking an inventory of mineral resources in Africa particularly on precious stones and metals and propose strategies for their exploitation including proposals for the creation of joint ventures among member States.

26. Estimated cost of the project is $US 39,622.

(b) Meeting of the plenipotentiaries on the establishment of the African nuclear energy (ATF/001/041)

27. The project was initiated in 1988 but started in 1989 with the meeting of the Government Plenipotentiaries with a result that they established a Technical Advisory Committee on Nuclear Science and Technology (TAC). The decision of the meeting was that TAC meet regularly every two years.

28. The project was rephased into 1990-1991 and the unencumbered balance of $US 11,293 was for financing the meeting of the Technical Group of Experts to develop the programme and projects for TAC in 1990.

29. The total cost of the project amounted to $US 56,000.00.

D. SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND PLANNING DIVISION (SERPD)

(a) ECA post-doctoral fellowship in economics of development DAX 56 (ATF/002/099)

30. The project is designed to provide opportunity for young African graduate who have completed doctoral studies to sharpen and widen grasp of their knowledge of contemporary African economic issues and problems.

31. The cost of the project is $US 361,035.

E. INDUSTRY

(a) Preparation of a directory of project profiles of small-scale agro-allied industries and organization of a regional seminar for entrepreneurs in small-scale industries (ATF/001/040)

32. The project was started in 1988 designed to (a) prepare and produce a draft portfolio of project profiles; (b) organize a workshop of officials dealing with development and promotion of small-scale industries to improve on the draft; and (c) finalize the directory.

33. The project whose initial budget was at $US 249,730 is in its last stages of completion.

(b) Equipment to ARCEDEM (ATF/002/048)

34. Project is aimed at assisting ARCEDEM in the purchase of an equipment with an estimated cost of $US 57,500.

F. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE MULPOCs

(a) Gisenyi MULPOC (ATF/002/044)

35. This project is a continuation project from the previous years designed to enable MULPOC undertake important substantive activities including preparation of specific studies on:

(a) Facilitation of navigation on (Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika. ATF/002/044 and ATF/001/052) estimated total cost of both is $US 43,367;

(b) The development of small scale mineral exploitation in the countries of the subregion. ATF/002/049 at a cost of $US 25,000; and

(c) Integration of Women in Development in the Gisenyi MULPOC subregion, ATF/002/050.

36. The project aims at writing and publishing the fifth and sixth editions of the Gisenyi MULPOC bulletin on women in development within the framework of MULPOC's women programme. An assessment of the impact of training activities carried out would be done.

37. The cost of the project is $US 31,211.

(b) Lusaka MULPOC (ATF/002/036)

38. This is a continuous project from previous years aimed at providing administrative support to enable the MULPOC cope with processing of documentation related to its operational activities.

39. The total allocation for this was $US 130,264.70, the rephased portion for 1990 has been $US42,717.59.

(c) Tangier MULPOC: Preparatory assistance for the drafting of a treaty and protocols on the establishment of a preferential trade area for North Africa (ATF/002/001)

40. The project which started in 1989 is designed at carrying out the preparatory activities towards the economic co-operation and integration of the North African countries. The preparatory phase was to undertake studies in 3 sectors namely, transport, communications and energy.

41. The estimated cost for this was $US 40,115.00.